

Narrative Therapy

Stories consist of

- Events
- Linked in sequence
- Across time
- According to a plot

Key Concepts

- Social construction
- Externalization
- Exceptions

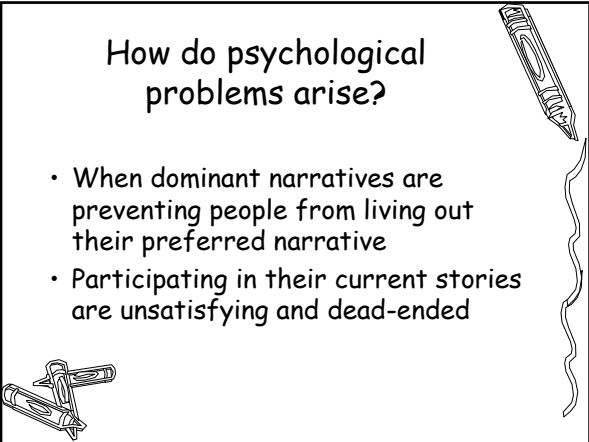
tuesdays with Morrie

an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson

Mitch Albom

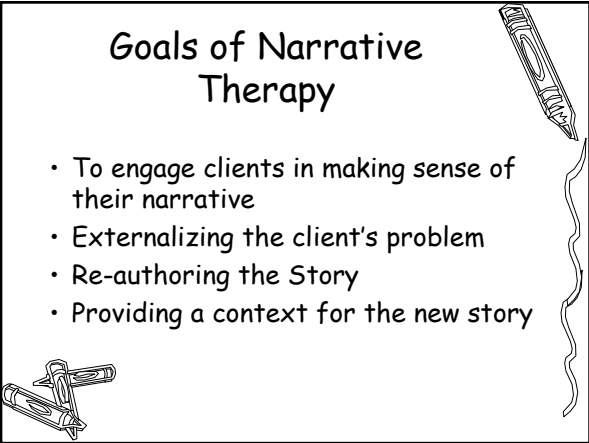
How do psychological problems arise?

- When dominant narratives are preventing people from living out their preferred narrative
- Participating in their current stories are unsatisfying and dead-ended




Goals of Narrative Therapy

- To engage clients in making sense of their narrative
- Externalizing the client's problem
- Re-authoring the Story
- Providing a context for the new story



Therapist's Role

- Fellow traveler
- Radical listening
- Side-by-side
 - Respectful curiosity
 - Client is expert
- Assist clients in new meanings and new possibilities



Therapeutic Techniques

- Identifying *Characteristics of Narrative*
 - Narrative Coherence
 - Narrative Closure
 - Narrative interdependence
- Deconstruction
- Alternative stories and re-authoring
- Documenting your story
- Outsider Witnesses



A Case Study

Abby is a thirty-six year old women who came into therapy to discuss abuse by a recent boyfriend but during the course of the first session discussed maltreatment throughout her life including the abandonment by her mother, sexual abuse by her father and sever physical and emotional abuse by her ex-husband. Now she complains of having trouble sleeping, gaining 30 pounds in the last 3 months, feeling down and thinking about harming herself.



Using the Narrative Approach, how would you work with this client?



Strengths

- Considers societal and environmental influences
- Especially helpful for victims of abuse
- Positive approach
- Others?



Weaknesses

- Does not consider the root "cause" of problems
- Vague understanding of how problems develop
- Applicability to all problems?
- Others?